



The Department of Anthropology  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

presents a seminar

by

**Pardis MAHDAVI**

Pomona College

on

# Children of the Emir: Citizenship, Family, and Migration in the Gulf

Monday, 17 Oct 2016

1:00 – 2:30 pm

Room 11 Humanities Building

New Asia College, CUHK

A light lunch will be served at 12:30 pm. First come first served.

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The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kuwait are amongst the largest migrant receiving countries in the world. But while these Gulf states are heavily reliant on migrant labor, they are hesitant to offer citizenship rights and protections to migrants, even those who have been born within their borders. In this presentation I draw on ethnographic field work with migrant mothers and stateless children to show how national and transnational policies hinder the lives of stateless migrants. The *kefala* system, a guest worker program, mandates that female workers not engage in sexual relations for the duration of their contracts. While some engage in consensual relations with boyfriends or partners, others are raped by abusive employers. When they become pregnant, it is a visible marker that they have violated both the *kefala* contours requiring contractual sterilization and *sharia* laws about sex outside of marriage. Migrant women are then incarcerated; they give birth in jail, stand trial for their crimes and are often deported back to their sending countries – without their babies.

Pardis Mahdavi, PhD is Associate Professor and Chair of Anthropology and Director of the Pacific Basin Institute at Pomona College. Her research interests include gendered labor, migration, sexuality, human rights, youth culture, transnational feminism and public health in the context of changing global and political structures. She has written four books: *Passionate Uprisings: Iran's Sexual Revolution* (2008) *Gridlock: Labor, Migration and 'Human Trafficking' in Dubai* (2011), *From Trafficking to Terror: Constructing a Global Social Problem* was (2013) and *Crossing the Gulf: Love and Family in Migrant Lives* (2016).

ALL INTERESTED ARE WELCOME